



Press Release

Monday 13 May, 2019

LTA TO INTEGRATE BRITISH PADEL INTO OPERATIONS

- *Move is part of the LTA's strategy to innovate formats of the game to attract and retain new players*
 - *LTA to use its expertise and experience to develop padel competition network*

The LTA has today announced it will integrate British Padel into the organisation's day-to-day operations. This is a strategic move to benefit both the growth of tennis and padel in the UK and forms part of the LTA's five year plan to grow the game by offering formats that are easier to play.

Padel tennis, which is growing rapidly all over Europe, is played on an enclosed court about one third the size of a tennis court. The rules are the same as tennis, played with the same balls although serving is under-hand and the walls are used as part of the game. Padel is a very social sport, always played as doubles and easy to pick up. Not being power dominant means it caters to all levels of play and age groups. Professional stars Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and the Murray brothers are all known to enjoy padel.

The LTA sees many advantages to incorporating padel into its operations as it has helped many other European federations to recruit and retain people of all ages into tennis. It will work with clubs, parks and tennis centres to support them in building membership numbers and regular players. In joining forces with the LTA, padel will benefit from the LTA's experience making improvements to the British competitions calendar, enhancing coach accreditation and education processes, as well as access to the LTA's facility grants scheme.

LTA CEO Scott Lloyd said, *"We are delighted to bring British Padel into the LTA family. We want to open tennis up to as many people across the country as we can and a key element of our strategy to do this is to introduce innovative formats of the game which will help to retain existing players and create a simpler route for new players into our sport. I am sure that with the LTA's support, padel will offer new and exciting opportunities for clubs, parks and tennis centres in Britain."*



Tom Murray, Founder of British Padel, will assume a new role within the LTA as Head of Padel, having been an executive director of British Padel since 2012 with more than ten years' experience in the sports management and banking sectors. He is also a former professional tennis player.

Tom Murray, Founder of British Padel, said: *"I'm excited to be working with the LTA and look forward to embarking on this exciting project. This is a big step for padel as it means achieving official recognition for the sport, which will lead to new opportunities for tennis and squash clubs, leisure facilities, players, coaches, and entrepreneurs throughout the UK."*

The LTA plans to build three padel courts during 2019/20 to add to the number of existing playable tennis courts at the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton. They will have multiple purposes including elite player use, coach education provision and community use.

The origins of Padel can be traced back to the 1960s in Mexico, where in 1974 it travelled to the south coast of Spain and became a sporting sensation. In 1993, the Sports Council of Spain recognised Padel as a sport whilst changing the spelling (from Paddle to Padel) for pronunciation purposes in the Spanish language. Now approximately six million people play in Spain and a number of other tennis federations, such as France, Italy, Belgium and Holland have already incorporated padel into their competition structures and operational delivery.

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For LTA media enquiries please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

ABOUT THE LTA:

The LTA is the National Governing Body of tennis for Great Britain. We are here to govern and grow tennis, from grassroots participation through to the professional game. Our vision is "Tennis Opened Up" and we're on a mission to grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable. We work with schools, with volunteers, with coaches and with venues across the whole country. We also represent the interests of over 590,000 Members, men and women, girls and boys, playing on more than 23,000 courts. The LTA runs and supports a network of 11,500 approved tournaments for players of all ages, the four corner-stones of which are the premier grass-court events leading up to The Championships, Wimbledon: the Nature Valley Open (at Nottingham), the Nature Valley Classic (at Birmingham), the Fever-Tree Championships (at The Queen's Club, London) and the Nature Valley International (at Eastbourne). For further information about the LTA and tennis in Britain, visit www.lta.org.uk or follow us on Twitter [@the_LTA](https://twitter.com/the_LTA)

ABOUT BRITISH PADEL

The British Padel Federation started in 2012 and has an affiliation to the International Padel Federation. There are currently 31 Padel clubs in the country with 60 courts (including Will to Win at Hyde Park and Regents Park, Rocks Lane Bishops Park, the West Hants Club in Bournemouth, and Tennis World in Middlesbrough) and 3,187 registered players. For more about the history of Padel, read here: <https://www.britishpadel.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/history-of-the-sport-since-1992.pdf>

